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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3277  
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 002852

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR  
WILLIAMS/GREENE/WATERS/WAECHTER; NEA/RA FOR LAWSON; NSC FOR  
ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGERFO; TREASURY FOR NUGENT/ADKINS; USAID FOR  
BORODIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SENV PHUM PREL KWBG  
SUBJECT: MGGZ01 - ISRAELI GAZA INCURSION - IDF INCURSIONS  
STIR UP SEWAGE PROBLEMS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: USAID Gaza-based staff report that the IDF incursions in Gaza are directly impacting the treatment and handling of sewage in Gaza, portending negative environmental and health-related consequences. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) IDF operations in northern Gaza continue to prevent maintenance workers from accessing the Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun sewage "lakes," according to USAID staff. (Note: Beit Lahiya lake covers 30 hectares (300,000 square meters) and contains over 2 million cubic meters of sewage. End Note.) The maintenance crews also have not been able to shore up the levies on a regular basis, as a result of which sewage could flow into the residential areas below them. A breach of the levies could also cause untreated sewage to flow into the Mediterranean. According to USAID staff, this sewage could reach the Ashkelon Desalination plant intake pipe 8km north of Gaza.

¶3. (SBU) In central Gaza, IDF shelling caused damage to two pipelines in Nuseirat. As a consequence, the pipelines were rerouted to stream sewage directly into the Mediterranean.

¶4. (SBU) USAID staff said that the IDF bombing of the power plant transformers in Gaza in late June and the ensuing electricity and fuel shortages have limited the operations of wastewater treatment plants in Gaza. The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) issued a report July 4 warning that wastewater could pollute the groundwater aquifer if treatment plants remain inoperable. The CMWU also indicated that 33 sewage pump stations throughout Gaza have had to restrict their operations because of the reduced electricity supply. The report highlighted that this sewage could also overflow into the low-land residential areas of Gaza.

WALLES